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REGENTS REMIND PARENTS OF NEW COLLEGE ADMISSIONS STANDARDS

BATON ROUGE -- The Board of Regents for higher education this week is sending almost 60,000 letters to parents of 9th grade students around the state, reminding them that their sons and daughters will be the first class to be affected by the Regents' new college admissions standards that become effective 2005.

The Regents are sending the letters to school principals who have been asked to distribute the one-page document to the parents of 9th graders.

"We have an obligation to ensure that parents, students and school officials are aware of the changes in admission standards that require them to start planning now to be fully prepared for the rigors of college," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "This is a significant change. You can no longer wait until your senior year to decide that you want to begin preparing for college. As students begin scheduling their courses for next year, they must keep in mind that the time to prepare for college is now."

The letter to parents states that, beginning in the fall 2005, students who want to enroll in a Louisiana public four-year university must have completed the Regents' high school core academic curriculum (currently the TOPS core), and one of the following:

- a high school grade point average of 2.0 or higher, or
- an ACT composite score of 20 or higher, or
- graduation from high school in the top 50% of the class

The letter also states that some universities will have higher requirements and strongly suggest that students contact university admissions offices or high school counselors for assistance.

"If your son or daughter plans to attend a four-year university," Savoie said, "please be sure he or she takes the TOPS core curriculum when scheduling classes for the 10th grade. This is required for admission to a Louisiana public university and greatly increases a student's chances of

qualifying for a TOPS scholarship."

The new admissions standards framework is part of the Board of Regents' new *Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education*.

"This new plan," the commissioner said, "is a major initiative to create a postsecondary system that is more effective and one that will increase student access and success. We know that education is a primary solution to Louisiana's poverty and low ranking in all national surveys on social issues. Our new master plan promotes great access to education and increased student success. We all know that having more people with higher levels of education in our state would make a great difference economically and socially."

Savoie described the new admissions framework as an "unprecedented effort to set clear expectations early on, to ensure students have the resources to meet their full potential and to provide a reasonable institution-student match. This statewide admissions framework has never been done before in Louisiana. It is a bold and necessary step."

At the heart of the new admissions framework is the Regents' high school core curriculum. "After serious research and analysis of data," he continued, "we found that the successful completion of a core college-preparatory curriculum in high school is the primary indicator of success in college. That is why the core curriculum, now based on the TOPS core, is the driving factor in our plan and the most important component of the admissions framework. It will result in higher levels of success."

Letters are being sent out this month to remind students who plan to attend a public four-year university to schedule college preparatory courses when making their class schedules. This spring, students throughout the state will schedule next year's classes.